

VZCZCXRO7447

RR RUEHAG RUEHAST RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHDA RUEHDF RUEHFL RUEHIK RUEHKW
RUEHLA RUEHLH RUEHLN RUEHLZ RUEHNEH RUEHPOD RUEHPW RUEHROV RUEHSR
RUEHVK RUEHYG
DE RUEHTA #2233/01 3151130
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 101130Z NOV 08
FM AMEMBASSY ASTANA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3799
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE 0795
RUCNCLS/SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 0194
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0904
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 2042
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2028
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 2362
RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHEFAAA/DIA WASHDC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC 0359
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC 0276
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEHAST/USOFFICE ALMATY 0896

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ASTANA 002233

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, DRL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [SOCI](#) [KDEM](#) [KZ](#)

SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: ALMATY NOTES, OCTOBER 27 - NOVEMBER 7

ASTANA 00002233 001.2 OF 002

11. The "Almaty Notes" series from U.S. Office Almaty focuses on developments in civil society, the media, and the opposition in Kazakhstan's "southern capital."

UIGHUR INCIDENTS

12. According to an October 28 report of the International Human Rights Bureau NGO, two law enforcement officials recently dropped into a reception in honor of ethnic Uighur poet Mirzakhmet Merimov in the village of Chundja, in the Uighur rayon (district) of Almaty oblast. The officials allegedly began reviewing Uighur literature that was on sale in the lobby of the venue where the event was taking place. Attendees complained that there were no legal grounds for this "inspection." While the incident ended peacefully, the actions of the officials "hurt the feelings of those present," claimed ethnic Uighur academician Alimzhan Tilivaldi. He also detailed to the International Human Rights Bureau cases where the government is allegedly limiting the rights of ethnic Uighurs. Tilivaldi said that in 14 ethnic Uighur schools in Uighur rayon, school records are maintained in Kazakh, and that the rayon education department gave an order to remove Uighur signs from school facades. According to Tilivaldi, last year the issue of renaming the rayon was raised, but the ethnic Uighur population came out strongly against this move. He believes that local authorities are making serious mistakes that could incite inter-ethnic conflict.

STUDENTS SEND APPEAL TO NAZARBAYEV

13. Opposition website www.zonakz.net reported on October 30 that approximately 9000 students from 10 universities in Almaty signed a letter to President Nazarbayev appealing for increased scholarships, more spaces in university dormitories, free education at state universities, and stable tuition at private ones. The letter claims that there have been cases when students have been forced to vote for Nazarbayev's Nur Otan party.

ETHNIC CHECHENS ALLEGE ABUSE BY KNB

14. At a press conference in Almaty on October 28, Serik Sarsenov and Nataliya Gutarova, two attorneys representing a group of 15 ethnic Chechen youths, accused the National Security Committee (KNB) of subjecting their clients to "torture" to force them to confess to a serious crime. According to the lawyers, on September 1, Almaty KNB officers detained the 15 youths on suspicion of "hooliganism." The KNB was searching for two individuals who attacked a bank employee and her husband near their summer house in Karasay rayon of Almaty oblast. The bank employee, who was four-months pregnant, and her husband were severely beaten and stabbed by two individuals. She identified one of the 15 detained Chechen youths as one of the attackers. The lawyers maintain that the KNB subjected all 15 to "torture" during questioning. As a result of the interrogations, five were placed under arrest, and the remaining 10 were set free. Several of those released were hospitalized due to their injuries. Complaints about the incident have been addressed to the Ombudsman, Procurator General's Office, and the KNB. The Ombudsman has not responded yet. The Procurator General's Office and the KNB responded by maintaining that the allegations of "torture" have not been confirmed.

15. International Human Rights Bureau head Yevgeniy Zhovtis, who participated in the press conference, said that this case highlights general problems with the KNB. He argued that the KNB does not have appropriate procedures in place for detaining suspects and holding them in detention.

LIBEL CASE AGAINST OPPOSITION PAPER

16. The NGO Adil Soz reported that on October 23, the Almaty Economic Court began reviewing a libel case against the opposition newspaper "Taszhargan" and its owner which was filed by the Almaty oblast police. The lawsuit claims that articles published by

ASTANA 00002233 002.2 OF 002

"Taszhargan" in April -- "Police Complain about Generals" and "Motley Personnel Saluted" -- were libelous. The articles were based on a letter from a group of police officers complaining about abuse of authority by several senior police officials.

HOAGLAND